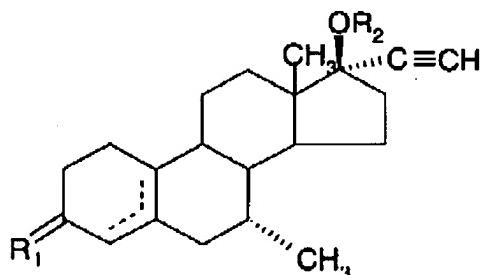


## II. Claim Amendments

1. (Presently Amended) A method of inhibiting the atherosclerotic process, comprising administering to a mammal suffering from atherosclerosis an effective amount of a  $7\alpha$ -methyl- $17\alpha$ -ethynyl-estrane derivative having the general formula I



Formula I

wherein

$R_1 = H(OR_3)$  or O;

$R_2 = H$  or  $(C_{1-18})Acyl$ ;

$R_3 = H$  or  $(C_{1-18})Acyl$ ;

and the dotted line represents a double bond in the 4, 5- or the 5, 10-position.

2. (Presently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein  $R_1 = (H, OH)$  or O.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein R<sub>2</sub> = H and the dotted line represents a double bond in the 5, 10-position.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the a 7 $\alpha$ -methyl-17 $\alpha$ -ethynyl-estrane derivative is 7 $\alpha$ -methyl-17 $\alpha$ -ethynyl-17 $\beta$ -hydroxy-estra-5(10)-en-3-one.

Claim 5 (Cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer)

6. (Presently Amended) The method of Claim 1 or 5 wherein the mammal is a human.